

SEGMENT 2
DRIVER EDUCATION
Risk Awareness

Fact Sheet 1 Why Should Young Drivers Be Concerned?

- **Risk** is the chance of death, injury, damage, or loss.
- One out of every seven 16-year-old drivers will have a serious crash before his/her 17th birthday.
- Four out of five young drivers will be involved in a crash during the first three years of driving.
- For 16- and 17-year-old drivers, the risk for crash involvement is at a lifetime high during the first six months of unsupervised driving.
- For every mile driven, the average driver makes 200 observations, 40 decisions, and one mistake. Once every 500 miles, one of those mistakes leads to a near-collision.
- Research indicates that **errors due to inexperience**, rather than high speed and irresponsible behavior, account for the largest share of young driver crashes.
- The largest single category of error involves visual search.
- Each year approximately 90 young drivers in Michigan are involved in a fatal crash.
- Each year approximately 35,000 (or one of every six) 16- and 17-year-old drivers are involved in a property damage, injury, or fatal crash.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Identify and explain possible errors of inexperience.

How far-reaching is the impact when a young driver or passenger is killed in a crash?

What about the impact on a driver or passenger who survives a fatal crash?

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- Other reasons for young driver errors:
 - Lack of attention to driving; the eyes are focused in the right direction but the mind is somewhere else.
 - Failure to adjust speed adequately for traffic, curves, and slick surfaces.
- Failure to recognize hazardous situations is the underlying error in most crashes.
- As the number of teen passengers increases, fatal crashes among 16- and 17-year-old drivers are more likely to involve a single vehicle, speeding, and driver error.
- Each year approximately 195 16- and 17-year-olds are involved in a fatal crash either as a driver, passenger, or pedestrian.

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Fact Sheet 2 When Do Crashes Occur for Young Drivers?

- 55% of all young driver fatal crashes occur in daylight.
- The most dangerous time of day for young driver fatal crashes is the three-hour period (2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.) after school.
- 35% of young driver fatal crashes occur on Friday and Saturday.
- The months of June, July, and September account for one-third of all young driver fatal crashes.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Why is the “after school” time period the most dangerous for young driver fatal crashes? How can you reduce your risk when driving after school?

Why is 9:00 p.m. to Midnight another dangerous time period for young drivers? How can you reduce your risk when driving during this time?

Why is September a dangerous month for young driver fatal crashes? What can you do to reduce your risk?

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- 30% of all young driver fatal crashes occur in the dark on unlit roads.
- 18% of young driver fatal crashes occur between 9:00 p.m. and Midnight.
- 10% of young driver fatal crashes occur between Midnight and 6:00 a.m.

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Fact Sheet 3 Where Do Crashes Occur for Young Drivers?

- 11% of young driver fatal crashes occur on gravel (non-paved) roads.
- 51% of young driver fatal crashes occur on county roads.
- 96% of all young driver fatal crashes occur on roadways with a speed limit of 55 MPH or less.
- 75% of young driver fatal crashes occur on sections of roadway where no traffic control devices are in effect.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Why are young driver fatal crashes on county roads so high? How can you reduce your risk when driving on county roads?

What sections of roadway do you consider most dangerous in the areas where you typically drive? How can you reduce your risk when driving in these areas?

Why are fatal crashes on interstate highways low for young drivers?

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- 3.5% of young driver fatal crashes occur on interstate highways.
- 71% of young driver fatal crashes occur while driving a vehicle on a straight-away.
- 9% of young driver fatal crashes occur while driving on a curve.
- 6% of young driver fatal crashes occur while making a left turn.
- 15% of young driver fatal crashes occur on roadways with a speed limit of 35 MPH or less.
- 14% of young driver fatal crashes occur at stop signs.
- 10% of young driver fatal crashes occur on roadways where traffic control devices are in effect.

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Fact Sheet 4 Young Drivers + Passengers = Increased Risk

- The risk of fatal crash involvement for a 16-year-old driver increases 40% if one passenger is present, 86% if two passengers are present, and 182% with three or more passengers present. For 17-year-old drivers the comparable risk factors are 48% if one passenger is present, 158% if two passengers are present, and 207% with three or more passengers present.
- In approximately one-third of all fatal crashes involving young novice drivers, the novice driver is killed.
- In fatal crashes involving young novice drivers, approximately two-thirds of those killed are other passengers, other drivers or pedestrians, with occupants in the young driver's vehicle accounting for 64% of the fatalities.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

How do you reduce distraction while driving when you have peer passengers in your vehicle?

Being a passenger in a young driver's vehicle is more dangerous than being the driver. How do you reduce your risk when you are a passenger in a young driver's vehicle?

What have you discussed with your parents about limiting the number of passengers in your vehicle?

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Fact Sheet 5 What Type of Vehicle(s) Are Young Drivers Driving?

- In fatal crashes involving young drivers, 41% of the vehicles driven are 10 years old or older.
- One year after licensure, only 35% of young drivers are driving the types of vehicles recommended for them – midsize or large passenger cars.
- Teenage vehicle owners are likely to drive more miles, take more risks, receive more traffic violations, and be involved in more crashes than those who do not own vehicles.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

If you drive an older vehicle, how can you ensure the vehicle is safe? What measures can you take to safely drive an older vehicle?

What types of vehicles do you drive? What safety features do your vehicles have (i.e., antilock brakes, air bags, stability control, etc.)?

Safe vehicle resources:

The Insurance Institute of Highway Safety (<http://www.iihs.org/ratings/default.aspx>) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (<http://www.safercar.gov/>) rate vehicles based on performance in crash tests.

Using the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's data or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's data, find out the crashworthiness of the vehicle you will be driving with your Level 2 license.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- In fatal crashes involving young drivers, 9% of the vehicles driven are 15 years old or older.

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Fact Sheet 6 What Types of Crashes Are Young Drivers Involved in?

- 37% of young driver fatal crashes are single vehicle incidents, compared to 50% for all Michigan drivers.
- 63% of young driver fatal crashes involve two or more vehicles.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Why are there fewer single-vehicle fatal crashes involving young drivers?

Why are young drivers involved in very few rear-end fatal crashes?

Why are there more multi-vehicle versus single-vehicle fatal crashes involving young drivers?

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- 19% of young driver fatal crashes are head-on with another vehicle.
- 4% of young driver fatal crashes are rear-end crashes.

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Fact Sheet 7 What Are the Road and Weather Conditions When Fatal Crashes Occur Involving Young Drivers?

- 84% of young driver fatal crashes occur during fair weather conditions.
- 74% of young driver fatal crashes occur on a dry road surface.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Why are majority of young driver fatal crashes on dry road surfaces during fair weather conditions?

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- 9% of young driver fatal crashes occur in the rain.
- 6% of young driver fatal crashes occur in the snow.
- 1% of young driver fatal crashes occur in fog.
- 17% of young driver fatal crashes occur on wet roads.
- 4% of young driver fatal crashes occur on icy roads.

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Fact Sheet 8 What Other Factors Contribute to Young Driver Fatal Crashes?
(Gender, Safety Belt Usage, Alcohol Consumption)

- In Michigan, 64% of the young drivers involved in fatal crashes were male drivers, while 36% were female drivers.
- In Michigan, 25% of all young drivers involved in fatal crashes were not using a safety belt.
- In Michigan, 9% of all young drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking alcohol, as compared to 19% for all drivers.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Why are 25% of the young drivers involved in fatal crashes not wearing their safety belts?

Why are there fewer alcohol-related fatal crashes involving young drivers?

Why are more young male drivers involved in fatal crashes than young female drivers?

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Fact Sheet 9 How Big a Factor Are Distractions?

- Distractions cause young drivers to concentrate on things other than driving.
- Cell phone use impairs a driver's ability to handle the ever-changing driving environment, similar to a driver with a .08 Blood Alcohol Content.
- A young driver reading a text message or "texting" is even more impaired. This is why texting while driving is called "driving while intoxicated."
- Drivers who use cell phones while driving are four times more likely to be involved in a crash than drivers who are not using cell phones.
- Brain power associated with driving decreases by 40% when a driver listens to someone talk, whether it is a passenger or the radio.
- Research reveals that young drivers' brains may not be fully developed until the age of 25.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

How many of you talk on a cell phone while driving?

How many of you send text messages while driving?

Do you believe that young drivers are more easily distracted than other drivers?

Do you believe that experienced drivers can multi-task better than you?

How does brain development affect your ability to handle distractions?

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- For young drivers, distractions are compounded by inexperience; a panicked reaction or overreaction is more common and more likely.
- A recent survey of Minnesota teens reported that 86% read text messages while driving, and 75% sent text messages while driving.
- The most recent survey of dangerous driver behavior reported that 73% of all drivers use a cell phone while driving.
- A study released in April 2006 reported that some form of driver distraction, occurring within three seconds of the incident, contributed to nearly 80% of all crashes and 65% of near-crashes.

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Fact Sheet 9 (Continued) How Big a Factor Are Distractions?

- 50% of rear-end crashes and 30% of all crashes can be prevented with an additional half second of reaction time.
- Driving while multi-tasking inhibits your ability to concentrate. Your lack of awareness may cause other drivers to drive more defensively.
- Multi-tasking while driving results in “inattention blindness” or the inability to recognize objects encountered in the driver’s field of vision.
- Cell phone use, text messaging and driving all require the same brain function.
- Research confirms that young drivers are less proficient at multi-tasking while driving compared to adults. One study reported that cell phone use while driving resulted in adults failing to identify hazardous events at a rate of 13%, while teens failed to identify at a rate of 53%.
- The prefrontal cortex (the front portion of the brain that controls judgment, decision-making, multi-tasking, planning, reasoning, and social skills) is not fully matured in young drivers, making them more susceptible to peer pressure.

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Profile of a Michigan Fatal Crash Involving a Young Driver

Male driver

Level 2 license within past six months

Driving on a dry county road during daylight

Straight stretch of roadway without a traffic control device present

Peer passengers in the vehicle

Distractions present

Failure to recognize a hazardous situation

Multi-vehicle crash occurs

Passenger is killed